

# **The Christian System Of Salvation And Augustinian-**

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# **The Christian System Of Salvation And Augustinian-Calvinian Predestination Are In Diametrical Opposition.**

Taken From:

## **The Evangelical Revival**

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1920

**The Five Points**-- Before proceeding we must lay before the reader the Five Points established by the Synod of Dort, which put the finishing touch to Calvin's system, and which were unanimously accepted by the Puritans of the Stuart period, were received as inspired truths by the Westminster Assembly, and which formed the basis of its Catechisms. These also constituted the groundwork of Whitefield's teaching. We have prefixed to our account of Wesley a summary of his creed, and we must do the same before handling Whitefield himself any further. Moreover, as the same teaching, somewhat modified, was preached by the Evangelical Fathers in the Church, it deserves statement here.

We are not disposed to dispute that they had considerable justification for their teaching. They had the authority of S. Augustine and the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages. But where the error lay was in elevating into a doctrine necessary to Salvation, what was no other than a theologic speculation, a mere conjecture.

Art. I. God, by an absolute decree, has elected to Salvation a very small number of men, without any regard to their faith and obedience whatsoever, and has secluded from saving Grace all the rest of mankind; and has appointed them, by the same decree, to eternal Damnation, without any regard to their infidelity or impenitency.

Art. II. That Christ Jesus hath not suffered for any other but the Elect only,



having neither had any intent nor commandment of the Father to make Satisfaction for the sins of the whole World.

Art. III. That, by Adam's Fall his posterity lost their Free Will, being put to an unavoidable necessity to do, or not to do, whatsoever they do, or do not, whether it be good or evil; being thereunto predestinated by the eternal and effectual secret decree of God.

Art. IV. That God, to save the Elect from the corrupt mass, doth beget Faith in them by a power equal to that whereby He created the World, and raised up the dead; insomuch that such unto whom He gives grace cannot reject it, and the rest, being reprobate, cannot accept it.

Art. V. That such as have once received that grace of Faith can never fall from it finally, notwithstanding the most enormous sins they have committed.

### **Unchristian--**

**That this doctrine is not that of the Church, is practically anti-Christian, is contrary to Natural Religion, and is immoral in its tendency, is our contention.**

Augustine was obliged to admit that Predestination repugned the implanted convictions of man as to God's justice; and Calvin sorrowfully confessed that it encouraged over-confidence and immorality, as we shall see presently.

How could the Christian, obsessed with the doctrine of Dort, when broken and contrite-hearted, bowed under shame and sense of alienation from God, say, "I will arise and go to my Father and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," when, for ought he knew to the contrary, he had been ordained from all eternity to waste his substance in riotous living, and to fill his belly with the husks that the swine did eat? How could the tearful penitent receive any consolation from the Greek hymn:

If I ask Him to receive me  
Will He say me nay?

Not till earth, and not till heaven

Pass away!



Who could pray in childlike trust to "Our Father which art in heaven" with confidence of acceptance? Who worship with a heart brimming over with love when he could not be sure that he was not predestined to eternal death before ever the light sprang out of darkness, ten thousand years before he was born? How be sure that he would not be spurned by the foot of Christ into the pit where preys the undying worm? How could he ask, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that have trespassed against us," when he knows that he was foreordained, however much charity he might feel and whatever promptness of forgiveness he might exhibit, to be repelled from the throne of Grace? Grace! no grace there, only inexorable In justice reigning above the steely heavens on the red-hot iron throne.

**Demoralizing**-- That this doctrine led to demoralization Calvin was obliged to admit. He plaintively declared that it ought not to do so, but could not deny that it did so. What man can hear that life and death are fixed by an eternal and immutable decree of God, without immediately concluding that it is of no consequence how he acts, since no work of his can either hinder or further the predestination of God? Thus all will rush on, and, like desperate men, plunge headlong wherever Lust inclines. And it is true that this is not altogether a fiction, for there are multitudes of a swinish nature who defile the doctrine of Predestination by their profane blasphemies, and employ it as a cloak to evade all admonition and censure: God knows what He has determined to do with regard to us: if He has decreed our Salvation He will bring us to it in His own time; if He has doomed us to death, it is in vain for us to fight against it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institutes, Bk. III, c. 23, 12.

Augustine allowed that the doctrine of predestination was a perplexing mystery, and that, as he understood it, it disagreed with man's natural, implanted belief in God's Justice; an admission that should have amply sufficed for its condemnation.

**S. Augustine**-- Augustine is generally regarded, and not without justice, as the theological ancestor of Calvin, whose doctrine was finally capped and clenched at Dort.

Augustine of Hippo was one with Origen and Clement and Cyril of Alexandria, in constituting a party endeavouring to introduce into and fuse together Pagan philosophy with simple Christian belief. Philo, from a



Jewish standpoint, had striven to achieve the same end by amalgamating the Mosaic law with Platonism, and the result was a mass of absurdity. And S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, had placed the Pagan dogma of immutable Predestination and the Hebrew doctrine of Conditional Predestination, side by side, without making any attempt to fuse together two contradictory theories.

**The Philosophers--** The question of Inevitable Fate had exercised the minds of the Greek philosophers and had been the theme of the Dramatists. It was a fascinating topic on which to argue and dispute, because it was one on which no one knew anything, and arguments were but guesses. The plain, simple Christian doctrine sufficed for plain, simple Christian folk, but for men of active, questioning minds something must be furnished out of Christianity to amuse and occupy restless and irreverent brains. This these Fathers of the African Church attempted to supply. Augustine would have done better to throw to them for disputation the surface, aspect, and character of that face of the moon which is persistently turned from our sight, as though purposely withdrawn from being speculated upon. Had he done that and rested there, he would not have trenched upon those things which have not been revealed a procedure so strongly reprobated by the Apostle.

"The language by which the Christian Church has always expressed the truths of Man's Free Will and Divine Grace has been (simply enough), that the one could do no good thing without the aid of the other, nihil bonum sine gratia. This formula satisfied the simplicity of the Primitive Church, as it has satisfied the uncontroversial faith of all ages, and no desire was felt for further expression and a more exact truth." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mozley (J. B.), Augustinian Predestination, 1855, p. 51.

But when Christian verities were thrown into the cauldron along with Pagan philosophy, an ebullition ensued, and the doctrine of Grace became a bone of contention, and the disputants laid hold of casual expressions let drop by S. Paul to serve their purpose. The Apostle knew nothing of the philosophizing of the Faith that would not take place till about three hundred and fifty years after his death.

**First Preachers declare Facts--** At the first outset the teachers of the Church did no more than testify to a series of facts. They had been witnesses to the Death, the Resurrection, and to the Ascension. They



had heard the moral teaching of Christ, and had laid to heart His promises. No attempt was made to elaborate these into a theologic system. Only S. John had laid down the theologic fact of the Divinity of Christ, the Logos; and S. Paul, while insisting on Christ being God incarnate as his special Gospel, threw out certain speculative ideas when involved in controversy which were loans from the Colonnades at Tarsus.

Philosophic Minds desire to Rationalize the Faith-- But when from all sides and out of every class men flowed into the Church, and Believers were not confined to slaves, pious women, and petty traders, but comprised as well men of searching intellects from the forum and the schools, then these restless minds demanded something more acceptable than belief in a series of facts. They wanted a theory of their new faith. They had brought with them their philosophic ideas in which they had been bred, and their disputative spirit. They took the disjointed articles of the Creed and attempted to fit them together into a system, much as a child takes the shapeless members of a puzzle-picture and labours to piece them together into a congruous whole. And this they did for two reasons: In the first place they sought for a rational basis for their own mental satisfaction, and in the next place they desired to represent Christianity to their heathen friends of the porch and the Academy, as a rival Philosophy, and that based not on Conjecture but on Revelation. But in so doing, to a large extent, they revolutionized Christianity, converting it from a religion of Faith in simple truths, into a rational philosophy.

Still, to the poor and feeble, the ignorant and suffering, it was a religion of Faith, of trust, of repose in God. But to the wise and learned it was a ring, staked round for logicians to wrangle in.

**Danger of so Doing--** What a risk it was, to attempt to tangle up elementary truths with philosophy to the obscuration rather than the elucidation of the factors of the faith. The danger of rationalizing and of deducing theoretic conclusions from the facts is, and has been, the imposition of the conclusions arrived at by theologians, as essential verities on which Salvation depends, not as harmless speculations to be accepted as possible, or to be tossed aside as valueless.

This has been the case repeatedly: as in the case of Predestination and Indefectibility of Grace; of Justification by Faith alone; of Vicarious Sacrifice; of the Immaculate Conception; of Papal Infallibility: some blown



out of a few elementary Truths, some out of nothing at all, till in shape, character, tendency, they bear no resemblance whatever to those Verities, if any, out of which the windy lungs of theologians have puffed, strained and expanded them.

Half a century ago, the writer was curate in a Yorkshire town, where were shoddy mills, in which rags of all descriptions, the tattered breeches of the pauper, the discarded petticoats of the female tramp, were torn to shreds and pulverized. And when cloth was woven, the "Devil's dust "of this discarded stuff was dribbled in, so that what was turned out was one part sound and three parts shoddy. An American Government order came for a thousand blankets. When delivered at New York they had to be shovelled and wheel-barrowed away as worthless dust, leaving but an inconsiderable and practically useless residuum of fibre. It was so with Christianity when philosophized. What an incalculable amount of shoddy has been associated with it! and with what deplorable results! True Christianity has been rejected by thousands unable to distinguish the fibre from the admixture. And of all dribblers of "Devil's Dust "into the web and woof of Christianity none produced more lasting mischief than the Bishop of Hippo.

As Our Lord said, What is hid from the wise and prudent is revealed unto babes. There is not a child in our Sunday Schools but knows more of practical Christianity than any of those theological shoddy manufacturers, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, the divines of Dort, of the Westminster Confession, and Pius IV. "Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? "Once again Christ sets a little child in the midst of us. Let him recite his Creed, his Duty to God and to his Neighbour, lift his little hands and voice in "Our Father which art in heaven," and before such a simple proclamation of the truth, "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world," and made doubtful that of theologians as well?

**Value of Theology**-- Nevertheless there is room, and there is work in the School of Christ, for men of questioning minds, of analysing and arranging abilities. Imagination, enthusiasm, piety, may run riot, and rush into extravagancies, unless there be some controlling and corrective force to check their vagaries. Without such, the Church would not be for all, but solely for the simple and ignorant. Christianity furnishes food for the studious and for the ignorant as well.



Augustine's first Theory of Christianity-- S. Augustine, who had been influenced by the Platonic spirit, hitherto viewed with considerable favour by the Fathers of the Church, worked out a scheme of Christianity on Platonic lines. According to him, God was the Summum Bonum, the Supreme Good, to Whom or to Which, all men wisely or ignorantly strain; some with rational, others with mis-directed efforts. God summons all reasonable beings to aim at Felicity, which is to be attained by the practice of Virtue; and to this end He has endowed them with Intelligence and with Free-will; for there can exist no Virtue without voluntary effort, and without Knowledge to distinguish between Good and Evil. Free-will is accorded to the agent, who employs it either in the pursuit of what is truly Good, or of some false light. And, according to his employment of it, approaches or withdraws from God, and renders himself more or less worthy or unworthy of Felicity.

In this, Augustine followed the simple traditional doctrine of the Church, a doctrine comprehensible by the most untaught mind and one agreeable to the natural instincts of humanity.

**Augustine's change of Opinion--** But in his later years he revised his earlier philosophy of Christianity, though by so doing he involved himself in contradictions, and was not infrequently driven to equivocations.

Before dealing with this new scheme, it is necessary for us to consider what had been the original, and was still, largely, the belief of mankind in the East and the West, relative to the Government of the World, of Nations, and of Men individually, as well as of groups of men in families and in towns.

**Primitive Belief in Providence--** The original conception of Providence was of a Deity governing all things.

**The Problem of Predestination--** The Problem of Predestination that has driven some to the depths of despair, and has puffed up others into Pharisaic elation, is, after all, one that can be solved by the exercise of a little Common Sense. But Common Sense is not a solvent employed by philosophers and, least of all, by theologians.

We must ask to be allowed to state the problem before proceeding with our story.

**Rigid Predestination--** Predestination is in theory the doctrine that God



has fore-ordained every thing created, mice and men, to carry out His Will, and that no creature of His can oppose, can deviate in any way from, His Will and the course He has marked out to be pursued. According to rigid Predestinarian doctrine, the Divine Will determines, before any individual is called into being, what he is to be, what his career will be, what will be the length of his days, what his ultimate destiny. And from this determination it is not possible for man to swerve by a hair's breadth. He is a mere pawn in the hand of the Almighty, to be put on the board where He wills, to be moved where He wills, to be sacrificed according to His good pleasure. But even the most uncompromising Calvinist of the present day must allow a certain margin for the exercise of the Will, sanction a narrow tract of No Man's Land. He will hesitate to assert that before Creation, when the morning stars sang together, and the Sons of God shouted for joy, it was predetermined whether on 1 April, 1920, John Jones, the small-clothes dealer, Leadenhall Street, an elect vessel, by the way, should get out of bed left or right leg foremost; whether it was prearranged in the Courts of Heaven that the Reverend Jeremiah Binks should introduce into his church the Mitre in lieu of Mercer's Hymnal.

But, if so, where is the line of demarcation to be drawn between Free Will and Divine Predestination? Who is to chalk that line? How is anyone to know where it is drawn if all be blindfolded by predestinate decree?

**Conditioned Predestination**-- There is, however, another doctrine of Predestination. It was that held by the Hebrews, and was accepted by the Early Christian Church. According to this, it was assumed that God laid down the general lines of a man's life, fixed where he should be born, in what social status, with what inherent faculties. But it has been left to his Free Will to profit by all that has been placed at his disposal, or to remain inert, allow his abilities to rest undeveloped, and to let slide the chances put in his way.

Our readers have but to look into their own lives to see that they have been given abilities, have been offered chances, and have either wasted their talents, and thrown away their opportunities, or have turned both to good account.

Surely this view of Predestination is one that commends itself to Common Sense, because it is the fruit of Common Experience.



And this was the view of Predestination held by the ancient Hebrews. The Prophets, the Psalmists had recognized Destiny as personified in Jehovah, everywhere present, determinative up to a point.

**The Hebrew View--** But the Hebrew Jehovah was wholly different from the gloomy, unalterable Tyche that drove the House of Atreus to overwhelming ruin. This is finely shown in the story of Jonah. The prophet attempted to fly from the presence of God, and from the performance of the duty imposed upon him. He was brought back to learn that the Eternal One is pitiful as well as just. Whereas Jehovah had pronounced a decree of destruction against Nineveh, yet He reversed that decree when He saw that the Ninevites repented in sackcloth and ashes. The Hebrew Scriptures contain many passages in which God is said to have repented Him of the evil He had decreed, and He did it not. More over, the Psalms are so couched as to be an appeal to God's forbearance and mercy, for pardon and non-execution of severe judgment. There were but two conceptions of Predestination possible, one irreversible, the other conditional. The first was the Heathen, the latter the Jewish idea.

**The Heathen Idea of Predestination--** The heathen conception of Destiny was that Predestination ruled remorselessly over every individual, and over all peoples. It was a roaring typhoon sweeping men to destruction, as straws, chaff, are carried forward by the tempest-blast, powerless to resist, tossing, whirling, impotent against the force that drives them whither it listeth.

It was this irresistible Fate that the Greeks expressed by the word *tuxe*, a force above all the Gods of Olympus. No prayers, no tears, no repentance, no subtlety of man could placate, could alter what was predestined. The thought underlies many a tale: as that of Meleager, whose life depended on a fire-brand remaining unconsumed; but, however successful he might be in all his undertakings; although, to safeguard her son's life, Althea treasured up the brand, yet she herself, unable to escape Destiny, was fated to commit it to the flames, and with it to extinguish the life-spark in Meleager. We have the same conception of unavoidable Fate in the story of Achilles, plunged by Thetis in the Styx, and thereby rendered invulnerable, save in the heel, by which she had held him; and this was disregarded, for a hero never turns his back on the foe. Yet it was in the heel that the arrow of Paris reached and slew



him. Herodotus abounds with such stories.

**Personification of Destiny**-- At first the idea of Destiny was vague and inscrutable. It was the Will of God, but a God impersonal, incomprehensible. Then it became some what detached, and was spoken of as tuxe; but still impersonal, and but casually mentioned by name by the most ancient poets. Pausanias speaks of the first mention of her name in the Homeric hymn to Demeter. 1

1 "Ignorant and unwise men, who foresee neither the Destiny of coming good or evil." In the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, Troxartes says: "Evil Fate is the appointed Destiny of all."

**Multiplication of Tyches**-- But whether by this name or by another, the conception of an overruling Will was never absent, though varying in the manner in which it was entitled. As regarded man, his whole career was determined by the Parcae, daughters of Night and Erebus, or the Abyss. Clotho presided over man's birth, and spun his general career, Lachesis spun out all the details of his life, and Atropos cut the thread of his existence with a pair of shears; and all the while they droned out the tragic ballad of what he was and what would be. Even the gods were subject to them. Homer tells us that Zeus, the king of the gods, would have saved the life of his son Sarpedon, but was unable, because the Fates had determined otherwise. All the several Morai, the Furies, and Nemesis, were but various personifications of the Predetermining Divine Will.

Every town, every village, every household, every person had a governing fate, and although that fate was thus variously called it was ever Destiny. Tyche was greatly venerated at Smyrna, where was a statue of her bearing up the globe on her head. She was usually represented with the horn of plenty in one hand and a rudder in the other, as the one who supplied the good things of life, but also as the one who directed its course.

To resist Destiny was given to neither men nor gods. The Romans had a proverb that even Salvation (Salus) was impotent against it. Man was in its grip, like the poor bird of which Hesiod tells. A hawk had carried off the various-voiced Nightingale in its cruel claws, and when Philomel wailed, the hawk scornfully addressed her: "Wretch, wherefore cryest thou? One stronger than thyself holds thee fast. Thou must go whither I will. Thou



shalt serve as my supper, and it so pleases me; or, and I choose, I can let thee go. Senseless is he who attempts to contend against superior strength."

**Æschylus and Sophocles**-- The first, however, among the Greeks to give a full expression to this world-wide conviction and develop it into inexorable law were Æschylus and Sophocles, in those gloomy, haunting tragedies relative to the fate brooding over the House of Atreus and the family of Ædipus. The House of Agamemnon was doomed from the moment of the first crime of Hippodamia. Destiny, not made to waver at the tearful repentance of Polynices, pursued the family of Ædipus till it swept away all the males, and his daughter, Antigone, slew herself on her brother's grave, rather than be buried alive. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy, made Destiny, or Predestination, the basis of his teaching. He forbade his disciples to pray that disasters might be averted, for that they must occur was inevitable, but to pray that they might meet them with equanimity. Zeno d, --circa 264 B.C.

"Destiny," says Clytaemnestra in the Choephoroi, "impelled (me) to these things "the murder of her husband." "And Destiny," replies Orestes, "provides the doom that is to fall on thee "the murder of the mother by the hand of her son. The same conception of unavoidable Destiny is expressed in The Seven against Thebes. "Alas! Thou Destiny, awarder of bitterness, wretched, dark Erynnyes! Verily thou art great in thy might! "It was Destiny that compelled the brothers Eteocles and Polynices to kill each other. Herodotus tells us that this same Predestination forced Cambyses to slay his only brother. "In truth" said he, "it belongs not to human nature to avert what is destined to happen." The chorus in the Heraclidae of Euripides, says: "No man is happy or miserable save through the Gods, and the same family does not always walk in good fortune, but different fates pursue it in different ways. It is wont to throw down one from a lofty station into insignificance, and to make a wanderer opulent. It is impossible to avoid what is fated, none can repel it by wisdom." Pallas Athenae says to King Thoas in Iphigenia in Tauris, "Fate controls both thee and the Gods themselves."

In the Prometheus Bound, the most sublime of tragedies, we have Human Nature, in its highest expression, represented as crucified to the cliff, held there powerless by brazen fetters, because he, Prometheus,



had traversed the purposes of Zeus. The vulture is sent to tear at his liver, with beak and claws to rend his vitals all on account of his having incurred the wrath of the King of the Gods. "Hast thou seen," asks the Chorus, "the powerless feebleness, no better than a dream, in which the blind race of men is entangled? Never, at any time, shall the schemes of mortals elude the orderly disposition of Zeus."

So also we are shown in the *Trichiniae* of Sophocles Destiny bringing Heracles to an agonizing death, brought about unwillingly by his wife Deianira. "Behold, ye virgins, how the heavenly decree of oracular predestination has in the fulness of the months been accomplished."

**Mohammedan Predestination**-- The conception of Pre destination, in other words, the execution of the Will of God, has become the ruling doctrine of Mohammedanism. Kismet cannot be avoided. This was the foundation of Arab belief before ever that Mohammed appeared as a prophet He confirmed, as a prophet, what had been for ages the conviction of his people, just as Æschylus and Sophocles in their tragedies did the same for the Greeks, The idea of Predestination comes out in many a tale. In the *Arabian Nights*, Alla-ed-deen says: "Where is a place of refuge from Destiny? Caution availeth naught against Fate; and from that which is written there is no escape." This also is illustrated by the story of Prince Agib, the Third Calender. In fact, belief in Destiny that cannot be escaped from, pervades the East. 1 It was as firmly believed by the Scandinavian and Teutonic nations. 2

1 Omar Khayyam wrote:

The moving Finger writes, and having writ  
Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,

Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

Among the Arabs there rose a philosophic school, that of the Motazilites, who strove to break through the shackles of the Koran and Predestination. They were defeated by the Ahasites, whose leader, El-Acasi, flourished towards the end of the ninth century. He was the Augustine of Mohammedanism. He proclaimed the verbal inspiration of the Koran, defined the attributes of God, and firmly established the dogma of Unreversible Preredestination.



2 Maurer (K), Bekehrung d. Norwegischen Stammes, 1866, II, pp. 162 et seq.

**Teutonic and Scandinavian Predestination**-- The idea dominates the whole of the great German epic of the Niebelungen Lied and Niebelungen Noth, as well as the corresponding sagas of Scandinavia. It is the theme at the present day alike of the student leaning out of his attic window, looking at the evening star, and of the Sennerin on the Aïm as she milks the cows; and at the same time drops a tear:

Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rath,  
Dass man vom Liebsten, was man hat, muss scheiden.

Wiewohl doch Nichts im Lauf der Welt

Dem Herzen, ach! so saner fällt, als scheiden.

It prevailed over the Finn mind, as shown by the Kalewala. It broods to this day over the Russian, and paralyses his initiative.

**Mediators**-- The thought, however, of an overpowering Destiny, not to be imprecated, not to be escaped from, was too terrible to be endured without some modification; and, with the inconsistency natural to man, the heathens piled up a phantom world of gods and demigods to act as mediators, standing between them and Destiny, to whom they could appeal to divert or to blunt the arrows of Tyche and of Nemesis.

**They Fall into Disrepute**-- But the stories told of the gods by the poets were too gross and too absurd to be credited, except by the most ignorant and unintelligent, and though the existence of the gods was allowed, it was allowed as possible only, and their myths were allegorized or rejected. This, however, was but the first stage in a down ward course that ended in their repudiation. Respect for them must have wholly gone, when such an outrageous play as the Amphytrion could have been put on the stage. And that was by Plautus, who died 184 B.C. Yet this was so popular that it was repeated several times with great applause. As Mercury in the prologue pretends it was produced at the special desire of Jupiter; and yet in it the King of the Gods is represented as an insolent impostor, an adulterer, and a gross sensualist. 1

1 In Pseudolus Plautus introduces this dialogue:



Ballio: Away with you to the gallows (in malam crucem).

Pseud: And thither shall go pimping Jupiter (as well).

See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, II, 13; IV, 26. How contemptuous cultured heathens were of their gods is shown by Augustine in his *Epistola* xvii, to Maximus. Euripides had done his best to turn them into a scoff among the Greeks.

Lucian, born A.D. 120, found a special delight in covering the gods in general, but the King of the Gods particularly, with ridicule. In his *Dialogues of the Gods* he brought forward the most scandalous and preposterous tales told of the deities, retold them with great wit and with no scruples. He showed the Gods to be absolutely powerless to help their votaries. The Cynic thus addresses Zeus: "Do you mean to say that everything occurs as is ordered by the Fates? Zeus: "It is so/ Cynic: "And it is impossible for you to reverse in any particular what has been predestined? Zeus: "Certainly we possess no such power." Lucian scoffs at Zeus for neither being able to protect two of the gold locks of his image from being stolen, nor for being able to discover and punish the thieves.

The gods in their distress, having ascertained that mortal men had discovered their impotence, call a council to decide what is to be done. A dispute is going on at the time between two philosophers. Damis, the Epicurean, mocks at the gods and denies their very existence. His views are greatly applauded. His opponent gets on very lamely in his defence of Olympus. Who is to help him? What arguments can be adduced to prove the existence and power of the gods? Heracles proposes, as the best way to silence Damis, that he should knock out his brains with his club; but alas! Destiny stands in the way. He can't do it, as Predestination has determined that the Atheist shall win the day. In fact, as Momus says in *The Gathering of the Gods*: "Everyone now despises us, and with justice."

The only deities who received any general, and that a private, cult, were the Lares, terra-cotta dolls kept in a niche by the kitchen fire, begrimed with soot and treated as mere mascots. If Destiny were denied, then there remained but Chance. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was the teaching of Epicurus against that of Zeno, who based his system of the World on Predestination. Augustine had to choose between the doctrine of the Stoics and that of the Epicureans. He chose the



former.

**Result--** What then was the result of the complete breakdown of the belief of the Classic world, Greek and Latin, relative to the Intermediaries? There was but one result. The floor had been swept clean, Jupiter with his thunderbolts, Neptune with his trident, Apollo with his bow, Hercules with his club, Bacchus with his thyrsus, all had been tossed pell-mell out of doors, and confronting each other stood the Advocates of Destiny and the Advocates of Blind Chance. And it was Damis, propounding the doctrine of Happy-go-lucky in the affairs of Men, that carried the applause of the unthinking and the sensualists, that is, of the young with whom was the Future. 2

2 Sunt, in Fortunae qui casibus omnia ponant  
Et nullo credant mundum rectore moveri,

Natura volvente vices et lucis et anni;

Atque ideo intrepidi quaecumque altaria tangunt. -- Juv., Sat., XIII, 86-9.

This was the situation when the Gospel was preached. This was the theme discussed in every school, and at every gathering of thoughtful men, perhaps also in every tavern where hot wine was provided.

**Contradictory Doctrines of Predestination--** An irrevocable and a conditioned Predestination are concepts mutually exclusive. It is contrary to common sense to suppose that the Apostle Paul should have wittingly maintained both simultaneously; it is simply incredible that he should have consciously accepted the Pagan doctrine of irrevocable Tyche, and have cast overboard all the teaching he had received from the Rabbis, confirmed as that was by what he had been taught to hold as the Oracles of God. What he sought to do was to prove his point from the Pagan as well as from the Hebrew dogma.

Gamaliel's lessons had struck much deeper than the arguments of the Philosophers and the impressions produced by the Tarsian stage in favour of Destiny.

**Early Christian Theology--** From the Apostles time down to that of Augustine, the speculations of active Christian minds had been engaged with Theology, properly so called, or the doctrine of God, touching His nature and personal attributes, including Christology, which treated of



Christ's divine and human Natures. This was objective Divinity. But when Pelagius appeared at the beginning of the fifth century a fresh class of subjects attracted attention. These were such as related to man and his destiny. Pelagius seemed to Augustine to minimize the effects of the Fall, as he imagined them, and to magnify the independence of fallen man.

**Pelagius and Augustine--** Pelagius positively denied that he had ever expressed himself as regarding man as capable of pleasing God unassisted by Grace, wherewith he had been charged before a synod of fourteen bishops at Diospolis, in A.D. 415. He was acquitted by them, as also by Pope Zosimus. <sup>1</sup> This exasperated Augustine, and he attacked Pelagius more vigorously than ever, and in so doing laid down assertions relative to Predestination and Indefectibility of Grace that have been cherished by a certain school in the Church ever since, but which are demonstrably Pagan imports.

<sup>1</sup> Later, when Augustine had obtained from the Emperor edicts condemnatory of Pelagius and Coelestius, Zosimus deemed it expedient to change his tone and to follow suit. Julian of Eclana complained bitterly of Augustine invoking the Secular Arm to persecute and expel those whom he could not convince by arguments. That Absolute Predestination was a popular belief he did not deny. Of course it is popular wrote Annianus of Celeda who had been driven from his church as a Pelagian, because it is a Pagan doctrine, and Pagan ideas were still afloat. He contended that he resisted Augustine's doctrine for the cause of morality, imperiled by the teaching of the Bishop of Hippo; and he said that the distinction between Christianity and Paganism consisted in this that the former did not teach that sin was what man was impelled to by Necessity and Fate, whereas the contrary was the doctrine of Paganism and of Augustine.

In his Confessions Augustine has shown us through what sharp convulsions and bitter conflicts he had passed, till he entered into repose of soul. Such a victory he considered as miraculous, and he thought he could not sufficiently exalt the power of God, than by reducing man's will to impotence.

Cause of Change of View-- There existed two causes for the re-shaping of his theology by Augustine.

**Barbarian Invasions--** (1) Augustine and all Christendom were



staggered at the disasters that had overtaken the Empire and the sack of Rome by Attila. Barbarism was drowning culture, Ignorance displacing Learning, a new and uncouth Heathenism blotting out Christianity; Force domineering over Law; and Order lost in a welter of Anarchy. And this taking place at the very time when the Church, victorious over Classic Paganism, was consolidating her position, and in a condition to make full use of her triumph.

After long conflicts, after cruel persecutions, wherein the blood of the martyrs had been shed like water; when peace and prosperity opened before her, one stroke after another fell on the Christianized Empire, beating down confidence, exposing the Church to the scoff of the Pagan, as the cause of all this disaster. Augustine did not look upon the Northern hordes in any other light than as legions of Furies sent against the Christian world to destroy all that had been achieved. That from among them Christianity was to rise in a form more sane, more sincere, than existed in the effete Roman world, was not given him to conceive as possible.

**Augustine Seeks to Justify God's Dealings--** How was Augustine to explain this mighty cataclysm? How meet the charge of the Pagans that the ruin of the Empire was the result of the defection of the Empire from the ancient Gods? How reconcile it with the law of God's dealings with man? How with His promises? How, if God be love, harmonize this doctrine with the horrible sufferings brought upon the civilized world on a Christian world?

Augustine thought he must reconstruct his theologic scheme from the bottom to the top, so as to justify God's dealings with the world at that time. This he attempted to do by answering objectors that the wrath of God was dealing thus with the world, because the world was wicked. Adam had sinned, therefore all mankind had fallen under condemnation. The curse of God weighed on them. 1

1 De Civ. Dei, XXI, 12.

S. Paul had adopted the lately ventilated theory of the Rabbis that all the sin that existed in the world was due to the descent of men generally from Adam. 2 Augustine followed the same line and improved on it. Not only had all men inherited evil propensities from Adam, but had also incurred a sentence of condemnation delivered against the whole human



race, as participating in the sin of the ancestor of mankind. Original sin entailed universal Condemnation.

2 No trace of this is to be found in the Old Testament or in the Gospels.

It was the old story of Prometheus bound. Mankind, like Prometheus, having transgressed, incurred the wrath of God, who chained him to impotence, and sent His emissaries to torture him. His emissaries at the time were the Barbarians, like the vulture ripping at his vitals.

**De Civitate Dei--** (1) The De Civitate Dei was begun by Augustine in A.D. 413 and it took him thirteen years to complete it. The theme is that in the world are two cities, that of God comprising the Faithful, to whom are allotted the joys of heaven, and the hostile City of the World, doomed with all its inhabitants to destruction and to everlasting fires. The whole work is divided into twenty-two books; only the last twelve are on the verity of the Christian Religion, and these are divided into three parts; the first four books describe the origin of the rival cities, four are on their progress in this life, and four on their several destinations. With relish he describes the tortures of the damned, and the eternity of their sufferings.

3 It is only through Baptism into the City of God, and continuance therein in faith and piety, that Heaven can be won, and that is the sole method of escape from the condemnation passed on all the descendants of Adam, because he had eaten a fruit when forbidden so to do. Augustine's was a narrow and cruel view, that every heathen man who lived a good life would be damned to outer darkness and everlasting flames, and that every unbaptized babe must perish eternally.

3 He says that as Salamanders live in fire, and as, in certain boiling springs worms are found to exist, so God may ordain that the bodies of the damned should last, unconsumed in Hell-fire throughout eternity. De Civ. Dei. XXI, 2.

**Augustine and Predestination--** (2) There was another problem Augustine sought to solve. The Freedom of the Will, to what extent was it free?

It is probable that the conflict in the Pagan world of thought between the advocates of an all-controlling, all-directing, irresistible Destiny and those of a drunken Chance reeling down to Chaos a dissolution of all Morality, tending to a dissolution of Society, and to a prospect of universal material wreckage, may have engaged the interest, and secured the advocacy of



the Christians.

Augustine may well have conceived that, in his championship of Providential Government, he was laying down a formula that expressed the belief of the bulk of humanity, at all events of sober and meditative humanity. But that he should have failed to grasp the conception of a Conditioned Predestination that was taught by the Hebrew Scriptures, as the real solution of a world- wide problem, shows how much more his mind was influenced by Pagan philosophy, and kindled by questions then in agitation, than by the Sacred Scriptures, at least in this one particular. He could see but two alternatives, between which to make his choice: either a Fatalism that was unavoidable, or Chance leaving Mankind to scramble on as best it could.

Quite unconsciously, Augustine elected the Pagan idea of Tyche, and accommodated it to Christianity, or rather accommodated Christianity to the popular Pagan belief. He could not help sharing in a conviction that was general among all non- Christian religiously minded men; it was in the air he breathed; it rang in his ears in the market, in the Forum, in the schools.

Augustine himself informs us (De gratia Christi 19) what the Pelagian system was which he took on him to subvert. Pelagius taught that moral freedom involves a freedom of choice, the faculty of deciding at each moment between good and evil; of choosing one of the two for its determination. This is the fruitful root which, according to the bent of the will, produces in all its glory the flower of virtue, or else the bramble of vice.

Certainly Experience was on the side of Pelagius.

**Denial of Free Will--** But, the idea entertained, that every act of man, every turn in his life, his every prospect, is predetermined, his whole course mapped out for him, without the possibility of his stepping aside, inevitably involved as its corollary the denial of Free Will.

Individuality due to the Emancipation of the Will-- In Nature there is progression from Dawn of Life to genus and class and on to the Individual; and every step in advance is made in the gradual emancipation of being from the constraint of circumstances, in the development of self-determination.



Dr. W. B. Carpenter says in his *Principles of Comparative Physiology*: "The whole nissus of Animal life tends towards the evolution of the faculties of Sensation and Self- determined motion, and its highest manifestation, to that of the Intelligence and the Will/ There is progress from the plant upward, with gradual and regular advance in Will power. In Man, in consequence of this law, is to be found the highest development of the faculty of self-determination in the complete emancipation of the Will. And man differs from his fellow-man, not so much by the colour of his hair, the shape of his nose, and the brilliancy or dullness of the eye, as in his force of will. It is power of volition, and of direction of life and action devolving therefrom, that gives personality. To declare with Augustine, Calvin, the theologians of Dort and Westminster, that man is deprived of Free Will, is to deny to the Almighty the accomplishment of His manifest purpose in Creation, to say to Him: "Thus far shalt Thou go in the process of fulfilment of Thy law, as to invest the dog and the baboon with resolute Wills, but we forbid Thee to confer this power on Man, the Crown of Creation." It is to throw man back to the position of the sponge, the polypus and the lichen.

**Slavery--** The moral sense of civilized men in the Old and in the New Worlds is condemnatory of slavery. But Augustine and Calvin, by denying to man the freedom of will, made of the Almighty a great slave owner, slave driver, impelling helpless man, willy-nilly, to evil or to good, according to His caprice. In one point Augustine was inconsistent. He allowed that God gave to Adam Free Will, and it was by exercise thereof that he fell, and by his fall extinguished the faculty of Free Will in all his descendants. But why that faculty lost? Julian of Eclana attacked Augustine on this point. How can we have lost Will when we feel that we have it?

**Augustine's Doctrine--** Men, so taught Augustine,<sup>1</sup> since the Fall, had lost immortality as well as self-determination. For some time he hesitated to admit that they had forfeited the Freedom of their Will. In one of his first works on Pelagianism he asserted its existence. He argues in behalf of it. In his treatise *De Gratia et Liber o Arbitrio* he says: "The fact that God's precepts themselves would be of no avail to a man unless his will were at full liberty to choose "proves its existence; <sup>2</sup> and yet, in the same tract, he says that the wills of men are wholly at the disposal of God to turn them whithersoever He chooses and whensoever it suits His



pleasure. This is giving with one hand and taking away with the other. As Euclio says in the *Aulularia* of Plautus: "Altera manu fert lapidem, panem ostendit altera."

1 In criticizing S. Augustine, we deal only with his controversial works, especially against Pelagius, and do not forget the vast debt the Church owes him for his other treatises, and commentaries.

After this chapter was written, there came to the notice of the writer a most striking and convincing work on Augustine by the late Dr. Allin, *The Augustinian Revolution in Theology*, J. Clarke, 13 Fleet Street; price 2s. 6d.; well deserving of study.

2 See *De Civ. Dei*, V, 9, 10. In it he emphatically defends Free Will against the dilemma proposed by Cicero: If Man has Freedom of Will, then there can be no prescience in God. But if there be prescience in God, then man can possess no freedom of the Will. "A man does not therefore sin because God foreknew that he would sin. ... It is the man himself who sins when he does sin" (c. 10). Soon after, he completely changed his opinion on this point.

The divine purpose even drives man into horrible and unnatural sins, such as those mentioned by S. Paul (Rom. i. 24, 25). On which Augustine comments (*De Gratia et Lib. Arbit.* XXI), after quoting other passages that he conceives established his point: "From these statements of the inspired word, and similar passages it would take too long to quote in full, it is, I think sufficiently clear that God works in the hearts of men, whether to good deeds, or to evil."

That the impulse to evil came from God was what the heathen taught, and the idea was borrowed from them by Augustine. In the *Aulularia* of Plautus, God prompts Lyconides to debauch the daughter of Euclio. "Deus mihi impulsor fuit, is me ad illam illexit." And again: "Deos credo voluisse: nam ni vellent, non fieri scio."

Julian of Eclana, who had been expelled [from] his see for his opposition to Traducianism, as he called Augustine's doctrine of the inheritance of an utterly corrupt nature from Adam, said very plainly that the God of Augustine was not the God of the Gospel; for by his teaching of the utter defilement of human nature he practically denied that God was the author of that nature, and so relapsed into Manichaeism. And further, said he, in teaching that God punished unavoidable sin, and arbitrarily assigned the



destinies of woe or of bliss, Augustine made of God one who was neither holy nor just. To create a man to lead a vicious life and then damn him for being vicious, does that comport with our ideas of a Righteous God. Does Scripture teach such a monstrous doctrine?

Augustine was placed in no small difficulty by his former admissions; but he wriggled out of it by explaining, especially in his Epistle to Pope Boniface, that he admitted that man had Free Will to carry him into the commission of every sort of evil; but that as to Free Will drawing him to God and God's service, that he did not allow him to possess. He could be drawn by Grace alone. Grace was a compellant, an irresistible force.

But here Augustine went partially wrong. *Xáris* is Favour, not necessarily *Gratia*, which is a partial rendering. It is best understood from its employment by S. Paul in 2 Corinthians xiii. "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, etc." That is to say, "May the Favour of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you." May you be regarded favourably, not may you be furnished with any gift. 1

1 But as used in the Church Service it is intended, or was intended, to mean more than Favour.

Growth in Grace is Increase in Favour. By Grace we are saved means that our salvation is due to our having been taken into favour with God.

The word has, however, a double meaning, as employed by S. Paul. Usually it signifies the favour, or goodwill of God towards us; but occasionally it may mean the Help afforded to such as stand in favour with God. Thus Romans xv. 15; "I have written to you the more boldly, because of the grace that is given me of God." Ephesians iii. 8; "To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach, etc." Sometimes it is employed to express the help one set of Christians would display to another. Ephesians iv. 29; "That your communication may minister grace to the hearers." Where S. Paul says that he was assured by Christ 2 Corinthians xii. 9; "My grace is sufficient for thee," it signifies Assistance. It is a mistake always to render *xáris* as Grace help, above all as a compellant force. Its more general meaning is Favour.

Augustine, Calvin, the Divines of the Westminster Confession would persuade us that all men are mere machines predestined to do a certain



work in a certain way, and are machines to be broken up and melted down in the furnace, when we have done what we were ordained to do.

**Election**-- Election to life is purely arbitrary on the part of God, as Augustine says in his treatise *De Correptione et Gratia*. He wrote in *De Praedestinatione*: "Not those are elected because they have believed, but who are elected that they may believe. . . . Therefore they were elected before the foundation of the world with the predestination in which God Himself foreknew what He would do."

**The Elect cannot be Lost**-- "Of those predestined and called," he wrote in *De Correptione*, "according to His purpose, no one perishes. And so, none of them ends his life in a transition from good to evil, because he is so ordained that he may not perish, but have eternal life." By this predestination of "His children, they cannot perish." "Whosoever by God's predestinate ordering are foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified . . . none absolutely can perish."

The number of the elect is so certain that none can be added thereto nor detracted therefrom. All this is simply the introduction of Paganism into the Church of God.

In the supplementary scene to the last Act of *Phormio*, which is not held to be by the pen of Terence, *Phaedria* quotes the popular saying, "Fortune fashions the affairs of mankind as she pleases. Rendered into Augustinian language this would read: "God orders the affairs of mankind arbitrarily." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Augustine adopted from Gnosticism, which taught that only the pneumatikoi were to obtain complete redemption, and admission to the Pleroma. He seems to have been influenced by the Gnostic Bardesanes, in his denial of Free Will. Cureton (W.), *Spicilegium Syriacum*, 1855, I, "Bardisanes on Free Will."

*Phaedria* concludes that men have their fates predetermined by the Gods, "and not by blind Chance." Augustine said the same. He did not borrow his doctrine from Terence, or his Continuer, but took up and assimilated the prevailing Pagan belief in the Immutable Decrees, against which the advocates of Chance protested. But these advocates were avowed Atheists; therefore, he assumed, their opponents were in possession of the Truth.



Men seldom see whither their principles tend. Augustine doubtless flattered himself that he had conciliated Theistic Paganism by his adoption of its doctrine of Predestination. Little did he dream of the mischief he was doing, of how subtly this Pagan germ introduced by him into the Christian system would lead to blood-poisoning, and do the work of Antichrist in many parts of Christendom very effectually.

**What was S. Paul's teaching?**-- Now the teaching of S. Paul, in our opinion, is that our relation to the Old Adam, i.e. to fallen human nature, is twofold; we are partakers of this degenerate nature with its irregular appetites, and by deliberate exercise of our wills, we yield ourselves to its proclivities. Just so is our relation to the New Man twofold: we are partakers of a nature regenerate in Him; yet it remains for us, by the exercise of our wills, to work out the new life which is already ours by infusion through Christ. This, we take it, is the sum and substance of Christian doctrine as taught by general assent in the Church in all ages.

But Augustine, and after him Calvin, the divines of Dort and of Westminster, taught the precise contrary, in that they denied the freedom of the Will. But the existence of this Will was the determining factor in the fall of man; and, in like manner, the possession of this Free Will is the determining factor in his regeneration.

Admit this, and inevitably Augustine, Calvin and the divines of Dort and Westminster proclaim themselves as ministers of Antichrist, subverting the entire scheme of man's recovery, as ordained by God.

We are far from forgetting the splendid work done for the truth by Augustine, and for the Church in the earlier stage of his teaching. Solomon was in communion with God; he was given the gift of wisdom by Jehovah. He was permitted to build and to dedicate a temple to the Most High, a temple on which the Shekinah, the glory-cloud of the Divine presence rested; he wrote his Song of Songs, his Proverbs, and possibly Koheleth accepted into the Canon of Scripture. Nevertheless, in his old age his heart was turned away to strange gods by his wives. And so was it with Augustine. His explanation of the Faith, his great achievement, the *De Civitate Dei*, are monuments to this day, testifying that he walked with God. But in his old age he was seduced from the God of Mercy, who had pity on the repentant Ninevites, and his heart and intellect were turned to follow the strange dogmas of the Stoics and the Pagan tragedians. We



acknowledge his early works, and reject the latter, as Antichristian, and the source of incalculable evil.

**Dangerous Tendency of the Doctrine--** That the doctrine of Predestination was a danger to morals the Bishop of Hippo was constrained to admit, and accordingly he advised that it should be preached with caution. In his treatise *De Dono perseverantiae*, he mentions a monk of his acquaintance who fell into irregularities, and who, when reprimanded, replied: "Whatsoever I am now that God had predestined that I should be." "And," adds Augustine, "this man certainly did say what was true."

Augustine was of the opinion of Naevolus in the ninth of Juvenal's Satires, who said: "Fata regunt homines," to explain and justify his leading a grossly immoral life. But when Naevolus proceeds to draw therefrom the rigid conclusion that it avails not to pray, as Destiny seals up her ears with wax to the voices of petitioners, Augustine would have hesitated to admit a fact that followed inexorably from the premiss.

There is something pitiable in the sight of a man of great intellect and consummate piety, as was Augustine, trying to adjust his system to Scripture, or, to be more exact, torture Scripture to establish his scheme. He was labouring to effect an impossibility, for, as has been shown, Pagan Predestination and Hebrew Predestination were incompatible ideas. To veil his difficulties he had recourse to quips and evasions, and to envelop his argument in a cloud of words, so as to blind the eyes of his readers to the inconsequences of the writer.

According to his ruthless doctrine all unbaptized infants were condemned to everlasting perdition; and he was obliged to express a hope that the fires of hell might be mitigated for them, as they had died without having known the distinction between good and evil. 1 But Julian of Eclana pinned him down. "What," he asked, "do you say that God who has declared His goodwill towards us, who has so loved us that He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us, that He is the persecutor of the new born, that He delivers over to eternal flames the little ones, on account of an evil will, who never were able to exercise a will at all for good or evil? "Augustine vainly struggled to harmonize this teaching of his with the revelation of Divine love and mercy.

1 In *De Pecc. Mer. et Remiss.*, c. 19 (# 25), he allows that infants dying



after baptism, would be saved. See also Ibid., c. 28 ( #46), not those who died unbaptized.

**Questions Raised--** Among the many questions provoked by Augustine four start up insisting on a straightforward answer and not a quibble.

1. What is the good of Prayer, when every man has been predestined ten thousand years before he was born to be broiled in hell fire through endless ages, not for any wrong that he has done, or else to everlasting felicity, not for any good he may have done? This point did not escape the observation of a Pagan like Lucian. What, he asked, is the advantage of prayer and sacrifice made to supreme Zeus when he himself is subject to Destiny? And what can prayer and sacrifice avail to move Destiny when its judgments are irrevocable?

2 In flat contradiction to Our Lord's teaching, Matthew xix, 17;, xxv, et seq.; v. 19, 20.

2. What is the use of Preaching when Predestination has long ago determined which of the hearers shall believe and which remain in unbelief?

3. What purpose can a Final Judgment serve when from all eternity every man's ultimate condition has been fixed? Augustine's doctrine resolves the Judgment Day into nothing other than a well-staged pageant.

4. Where is the obligation for Morality when all man's actions have been predetermined? This again was a point made by Lucian. If man's life is predestined to be what he proves himself to be, why, in common justice, should he be punished in this world or the next for murder, adultery, theft, sacrilege, or any other crime?

**Results on Doctrine and Practice--** Augustine, in the conflict of opinion raging in the Classic world between Destiny and Chance, could not, as a Christian, and would not consider the thought of Chance as admissible; and he vehemently spoke argued and wrote in favour of Destiny.

He had now two alternatives between which to make his selection:

1. The Pagan conception of an unalterable Tyche.

2. The Hebrew conception of a Conditioned Predestination, conditioned by the conduct of those whom it affected.

He chose the first.



This Paganizing of Christianity produced results in both doctrine and practice that affected ages unborn.

1. In the Mediaeval Latin Church it called up a legion of intermediaries between the Judge of the World and sinful man; as we shall see shortly. I

1 In the Oriental Churches it had no effect. Although in them there is Invocation of Saints, it reposes on a different conception. It is the realization of the Communion of Saints, in the asking of other members of the Church, as we might ask a mother or a brother or friend to unite with us in prayer. But no such a thought exists as the interposing of the Saints between man and the Saviour, the One Mediator between God and man.

2. It also called into existence the Calvinian theologic system formulated in the Institutes, finding expression in the Lambeth Articles, in those of the Synod of Dort, and in the Westminster Confession.

3. It also made Salvation to be unconditional, i.e. arbitrarily accorded, and wholly independent of effort on the part of man; thus entirely reversing the Biblical teaching; contravening what Christ Himself had laid down; and going clean contrary to the moral doctrine of the Catholic Church, as summed so simply and intelligibly in the Church Catechism, which expresses man's position and hopes as due to a Covenant. God promises His help, and eternal life, on conditions.

**Results on Character**-- Augustine's new doctrine, or, to be more exact, rejuvenation of an old non-Christian anti-Jewish belief, common to most Pagan nations, created a new type of character, analogous in Christendom to one that the same doctrine has produced in Islam. Everyone, according to the prophet, who accepted his revelation, and proclaimed: "Allah is great, and Mohammed is his prophet" is absolutely sure of Paradise and of frolics with the Houris, whatever his morality may have been; but the Giaours, who do not believe, are doomed to everlasting perdition.

What floods of ink have been spilled over a question that might be sopped up by a pinch of Common Sense!

Surround their argument as much as they can with verbiage, the advocates of Necessity or rigid Predestination cannot obscure the broad, firm fact that, if it be admitted, human responsibility ceases to exist. Dr. Chalmers might say in one of his lectures: "Necessity, rightly understood,



instead of laying an arrest on the powers and purposes of man, or in any way destroying his spontaneity, leaves him as busy and painstaking as before." It leaves him as busy and painstaking as before, solely because he does not in practical life believe the doctrine. The advocates of rigid predestination have ever been engaged in camouflaging the destroyer of morality, with more or less success, but all their words are mere daubs of paint disguising the pernicious destroyer, whose real effect is to sink morality.

**A Plea for the Exercise of Common Sense**-- And here the author must be allowed to put in a plea for Common Sense. There are Christian verities that are absolutely beyond the test of Experience, such as the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection, that must be accepted or rejected. If we accept them we are Christians, if we reject them we are not Christians, for they are fundamental doctrines. Common Sense cannot be applied to them because they are outside of human experience. They are revealed truths. They have been accepted by the Church Universal; and the Church here again is an assumption has been divinely assured to proclaim the truth in such matters as are beyond the reach of human knowledge. Reject the witness of the Church, and goodbye to these Verities.

But with respect to other dogmas, such as concern man's position before God, and his duties and responsibilities, it is otherwise.

In every human soul is lodged a power of judgment, based partly on experience, partly on Divinely implanted Natural Religion, that must never be ignored, and must be put in exercise.

Too often one encounters men possessed of the shrewdest Common Sense relative to their transactions with their fellows, who, however, seem incapable of applying it to dogmas they have been taught in their youth in their chapels and churches. . But surely, in the sphere of the relations of man to God, Common Sense should test all that they have been taught and have unintelligently received.

The writer has ventured to bring some of those popular dogmas to the touchstone of Common Sense. May his readers do the same.

We have referred several times to Lucian, and we will close: his digression with another quotation from him. Philocles meets his friend



Tychiades, and complains to him that he has been in the society of a number of ancient grave and reverend seigniors who have talked to him till his head spins of the gods and prophecies, and spiritual experiences. Never worry about these things," says Tychiades. "We possess a perfect antidote to all such stuff, Truth and Common Sense. Use them, and none of these crazy mental fancies will cause you any trouble."

**Cassian**-- The extraordinary genius, the intellectual audacity of Augustine imposed on the minds of the bishops of the Latin Church at a period when original thought was decadent, and the mighty influence of his name prevailed over the Common Sense of men who could not think for themselves. But Augustine's theories did not pass without protest. Cassian, a disciple of S. John Chrysostom, had come to the Province. He had established a little monastery on a knoll rising out of the plain west of Cannes, and on the way to La Napoule; the site is now deserted. Overgrown with ilexes and carob trees is a little chapel opened but once in the year, when Mass is said on 23 July, and numerous pilgrims are present. Cassian founded a school that maintained an obstinate contest against Augustinian Predestinarianism for considerably more than a century. The most distinguished prelates of the province of Arles were among its partisans, as well as the famous monastery of Lerins, the cradle of Saints and bishops of Southern Gaul.

That Augustinian doctrine was a novelty is not to be doubted. He himself avows that it was not that of the majority of his contemporaries. In his *Enchiridion* he states that his scheme was not in accordance with the belief of most Christians, and in another work he tells us that the usual reply made to the question Why men were not converted was "Because they are unwilling."

Prosper of Aquitaine was sufficiently candid to inform us that many Saints at Marseilles repudiated Augustine's teaching on the express ground of its novelty, saying that "such doctrine "had never before been put forth by any Churchman."

What, the clergy of Massilia asked, is meant by the injunction "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," Free Will be denied, and human effort be disparaged Prosper complained to Augustine: "When we bring forward the writings of your Beatitude, fortified by most valid and innumerable Scriptural testimonies,



they defend the persistence (in opposition) by its antiquity." 1 Cassian, in his Conferences gives us the doctrine of the ascetics of the Desert. It was emphatically opposed to that of Augustine. (Cf. the Conferences with Charemon and Paphnutius.)

1 Prosper informed Augustine that the feeling among the religious in the Province was that even if his doctrine were true that Predestination were Unconditioned, it ought not to be preached, because of the mischievous consequence that might ensue from it. It tempted the pious to feel secure and be inactive, and it led sinners to continue in sin, and despair, making no attempt to repent. We shall see how that to the present lay the great severance between the doctrine of the Church and that of Methodists and Independents consists in this very question, Whether Divine Grace, whether acceptance with God, whether final Salvation is conditional or unconditional.

We can see from the teaching of these Abbots what was the traditional view of the relations between Grace and Free Will, till Augustine startled the Western Church with his novel doctrine.

**The Massilian Clergy** --The theologians of the South of Gaul, except Prosper and Hilary of Aries, were united in resolve to reject Augustine's teaching, as not merely novel but also as practically dangerous. "They said, in effect," to quote Canon Bright's lucid summary of their position, "to treat Predestination as irrespective of foreseen conduct, and to limit the Divine goodwill to a fixed number of persons, thus selected, who, as such, are assured of perseverance, is not only to depart from the older theology, and from the earlier teaching of the Bishop of Hippo himself, but to cut at the root of religious effort, and to encourage either negligence or despair. They insisted that whatever theories might be devised concerning this mystery, which was not a fit subject for popular discussion, the door of salvation should be regarded as open to all, because the Saviour died for all. To explain away the Scriptural assurance was, they maintained, to falsify the Divine promise and to nullify human responsibility." 2

2 The Anti-Pelagian Treatises of S. Augustine, with Introduction by Bright, D.D., 1889, pp, liv, lv.

When Vincent of Lerins propounded his famous dictum that the truth was to be found in what was taught "everywhere, always, and by all Christian



communities," he directed his shaft against the Augustinian dogma, though he named no names. The Eastern Churches remained uncontaminated with this virus. In fact, so little interest did they take in the question that Socrates and Sozomon, the Church historians of the period, do not even notice Pelagius.

So wedded was the African Church to the Hebrew doctrine of Conditional Predestination that it used the story of God's repenting of His sentence against Nineveh, as a Canticle in Divine Service. Augustine himself admits this.

With his new dogmas Augustine introduced a whole category of new terms, "universal human depravity" "original sin," "effectual calling," and God's irreversible "decrees."

Novel altogether Augustine's doctrine was. He was the first in Christ's Church to deny that Christ died for all men, to deny to man the exercise of free will, to urge on the persecution of heretics to death, to exalt slavery as a Divine institution, to forge a theology so cruel, so shocking, that he himself, as he contemplated his accomplished work, stood aghast at its hideous completeness. <sup>1</sup> He was actually, truly an innovator altering the whole character of Christianity. A small clique of Augustinians in the province addressed a letter to Pope Coelestine, urging him to condemn the Semi-Pelagians. They met with a sharp reprimand, bidding them, as priests, to concern themselves with matters of practical Christianity, and not intrude into subtle theologic questions, and cease to attack the ancient doctrine. "The Semi-Pelagians," says Neander, "asserted and they could do it with more justice than their opponents that by them the ancient doctrine of the Church was defended against the false doctrine recently introduced concerning absolute predestination, and against the denial of Free Will; tenets wholly unknown to the ancient Church."

<sup>1</sup> De dono persever., XXII.

Disappointed in their efforts to obtain the condemnation of the Semi-Pelagians from either Coelestine or his successor Sixtus, the disciples of Augustine formulated their doctrine in a tract entitled *Praedestinatus*, in which they rejected all the quips and quirks whereby Prosper and Hilary of Aries had endeavoured to disguise its immoral consequences. The author of this work boldly states that the Almighty created some men to be sinners and others to be saints and that these latter, however sinful



their lives might be, and however unwilling they might be to be saved, will be saved in spite of themselves and their wishes.

**Semi-Pelagianism**-- The so-called Semi-Pelagianism of the school of Cassian and Lerins was but a restatement on Provencal soil of the doctrine of Chrysostom as taught at Antioch and in Constantinople. Dean Milman thus describes it: "The whole theology of Chrysostom, in its general impression, is a plain and practical appeal to the free-will of man. He addresses man as invested with awful responsibilities, but as self-dependent, self-determining to good or evil. The depravity against which he inveighs is no inherited inherent corruption, to be dispossessed only by divine grace, but a personal, spontaneous, self-originating, and self-maintained surrender to evil influences; to be broken off by a vigorous effort of religious faith, to be controlled by severe self-imposed religious discipline. As far as is consistent with prayer and devotion, man is master of his own destiny." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Latin Christianity, X, p. 166.

But at a period when thought was inert, half dead and dumb, it was ready to accept Augustine's venturesome system and acquiesce in it. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Council of Orange held in 529 to settle the controversy, while exalting the power of Divine Grace, decided "as to Predestination forcing men to evil, let him who teaches that be anathema."

**Gotteschalk**-- Augustinian Predestination seemed to have died a natural and unregretted death, as we hear no more of it till we learn that a Saxon monk named Gotteschalk of Fulda and Orbais, born about the year 808, having read Augustine's Treatises against Pelagianism, took up his doctrine with great vehemence, in an incursion into Lombardy, where he met with a bishop of the name of Nothing, whom he endeavoured to indoctrinate with the principles of Predestination. Nothing, troubled at this teaching, denounced him to Hrabanus Maurus, the new Archbishop of Mainz, as enunciating strange and dangerous doctrines. Hrabanus having inquired into the teaching of Gotteschalk wrote to Eberhard, Count of Friuli, with whom Nothing and Gotteschalk had been staying, and without naming the latter cautioned him against those who taught Predestination as making man sin in spite of himself. This, said Hrabanus, is in contradiction to the doctrine that God is a righteous judge.



**His Doctrine--** The teaching of Gotteschalk was as follows: Every man comes into this world a slave to Original Sin and exists in a condition of servitude to Evil. He is totally incapable of even wishing to do that which is good. Owing to the utter corruption of his nature he cannot make the smallest effort to obey God; and as he was born evil, so evil he dies. However, it has pleased Divine Mercy to redeem a certain number of these miserable creatures. This is effected by the communication of Divine Grace, which is irresistible, and is given gratuitously, without any regard to the recipient, whether deserving or not. Thus he was a faithful disciple of Augustine.

A synod was held at Mainz, 1 October, 848, in which the opinions of Gotteschalk were examined and condemned. The monk was sent to Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, who exercised an almost papal authority at the time. With him Hrabanus sent a letter to Hincmar: "We bring to your notice a vagabond monk named Gotteschalk, who has come from Italy to us at Mainz and who has been spreading abroad a scandalous doctrine of Predestination, to the effect that Predestination is determinative alike to the good and to the bad; that there are those in the world who are compelled by divine Predestination to precipitate themselves into damnation, being incapacitated from escape out of error and sin, as though from the beginning God had made them incurable and had doomed them to punishment and to ruin. . . . We have ascertained, in fact, that he has seduced a great number of people, and has drawn them away from labouring zealously for their salvation, for, say they, "What is the good of my troubling myself in the service of God? If I am predestined to death, I cannot escape it; if I am predestined to life, I shall attain to eternal beatitude, even if I do sin."

**Condemned--** In 849 a synod was held at Quiercy-sur-Oise, attended by fifteen bishops and several abbots. Gotteschalk could show that his doctrine was not novel, he could appeal to Augustine and Fulgentius of Ruspe, in its behalf. However, he was condemned, degraded from the priesthood, was scourged, and imprisoned.

But Gotteschalk had thrown the apple of discord among the theologians of France, and violent controversy broke out on the subject he had broached; wherein Lupus, Abbot of Ferrieres, Prudentius, Bishop of Troyes, and Ratram of Corbie took up their pens in defence of Augustine and Gotteschalk; but on the other side stood Scotus Erigena, also Florus



of Lyons, who assumed a moderate position, and Amelo, Bishop of Lyons.

In 853 another synod was held at Quiercy-sur-Oise, and another in 855 at Valence, upon the subject of Gottschalk and his doctrine; as well as on other matters. It is unnecessary to carry on the story of the controversy. What has been told shows how strong was the opposition roused in the Germanic and Gaulish realms against the doctrine of Augustine.

The Britons who had been converted had their own views as to Free Will and Grace, and found advocates in Pelagius and Coelestius, who roused the controversial wrath of Augustine. SS. Germanus of Auxerre and Lupus of Troyes were dispatched into Britain (A.D. 429) to preach Augustinian Fatalism, but it is extremely doubtful whether they produced any lasting effect. When the Scandinavian and Germanic races accepted Christianity, the independence of character common to both, which was so conspicuous, did not dispose them to regard themselves as incapable of forming and carrying out a purpose for good or evil; indeed, it is probable that the relief effected by Christianity to the Fatalism under which they had lived in Heathenism was one great cause of the acceptance of "the White Christ" who set their wills free to regulate their own lives.

**Scotus Erigena**-- It was from the Isle of Saints, to which Germanus and Lupus had been sent to preach Augustinianism, that came John Scotus Erigena, summoned by Charles the Bald to instruct the Church as to what it was to believe in Augustine's doctrine of absolute Predestination. He answered the call with alacrity, and in the year 851 he exposed to the eyes and nostrils of all men in his book *De Praedestinatione*, the cloaca maxima that Augustine had run through Latin Christianity. The Bishop of Hippo himself, Fulgentius of Ruspe, Hilary of Aries, Prosper of Aquitaine, and many another defender or explainer of Augustine's doctrine, had laboured assiduously with rose and lavender water to disguise the ill-savour of this sewer. Their equivocations, their palliatives, could be easily detected. John Scotus, as it were, tore up the slabs that covered and hid the stream of Paganism that had been introduced into the Church, and pointed to the fact that this stream, exhaling fetor and poisonous vapours, was not Christian at all. He affirmed that both divine Grace and men's free-will were alike denied by it, since it derived the crimes which lead to



damnation and the virtues that lead to eternal life from the inalterable determination of God. By unconditional necessity, on the one hand, Grace, as the free gift of God, is destroyed, and on the other, the free-will of man by compellant Grace is killed. Such a doctrine is irreconcilable with the idea of a good and a just God. But Scotus Erigena in speculating on God and on the nature of Sin did not himself escape falling into dangerous errors.

The question of Predestination was just what the schoolmen wanted in which to exercise their wits, and joust in dialectic tournaments; and for that cause it maintained its existence in medieval times.

**An Historical Sequence--** The following sequence seems to us to be well established:

1. The primitive belief of mankind in the known world of old was that an inexorable and inscrutable Tyche ruled supreme.
2. That, to avoid this fatalism, the Pagan world called up a host of intermediaries, to whom prayer could be made, and who were capable of deflecting the strokes of Fate.
3. That another doctrine of Providence existed among the Hebrews, who regarded Jehovah as being merciful as well as just, and that He ordered the course of the world and the lives and destinies of men conditionally, that is to say, not by an irrevocable decree, but by one to be put in force, modified or withdrawn, according to the conduct of men when made aware of God's will.
4. That the Early Church, in its first stage composed of Jews and Jewish proselytes, took over the Hebrew conception of Jehovah.
5. That in the Pagan world belief in the power of the intermediary Gods broke down wholly.
6. That this qualifying element being disposed of, there remained in the Classic mind only the alternatives of Destiny, and of Chance conducive to Anarchy.
7. That Augustine, out of touch with Judaism, and in close contact with Classic Paganism, accepted the Pagan doctrine of Inevitable Fate, and made shift to accommodate Christianity to it.



8. That Augustinian doctrine as to Predestination died out of consideration till revived by Gotteschalk in the ninth century, when it was repudiated very generally.

9. Thenceforth, however, it became the toy of the schoolmen, as an opinion to be discussed, but in no way to be insisted on as an Article of Faith.

10. In England it was reasserted by Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine, in the first half of the fourteenth century.

11. That it was restated as a logically formulated system *stantis vel cadentis ecclesie* by John Calvin early in the sixteenth century.

12. That at the present day Augustinian dogma is theoretically supreme in the Presbyterian "Churches" of Scotland, Holland, France, and Switzerland; and there it logically excludes all need for, all value in, prayer; as the "Decrees" are unalterable.

13. That in the Roman Catholic Church Augustinianism has so far prevailed as to have led it to reproduce from Paganism the system of Intermediaries.

14. That in the English Church, judged by her Formularies of Prayer, Augustinianism has no place whatever. It has been given, as the Germans would say, the "Gar-aus." It has, however, left its savour behind in certain of the Thirty-nine Articles, but in such a modified degree as to be innocuous. 1 The return is to the Jewish and Early Christian concept of Jehovah.

1 Also in the Catechism, wherein the child is said to be a child of wrath previous to baptism.

This is the conclusion at which we arrive; and which we think we are justified in asserting; and we feel disposed to say with the Watchman in the Antigone: "I readily speak to those that know; but, as to those that know not, for them I have no memory."

**Consequences--** It had been well if theologians of subtle minds had been content to toy with Augustine's theories in their cells, or toss them to and fro in the schools; but unhappily his opinions threw their fibres downward, and penetrated to all parts of Western Christendom. There it produced the effect of turning men's minds away from the conception of



God as a Father, to consider Him as a rigorous Law-giver, and Christ as a stern Judge, invested with every attribute calculated to inspire terror. In Michael Angelo's fresco in the Sistine Chapel we have the Augustinian idea portrayed with brush and colour. "Trembling and anxious, the dead rise slowly, as if still fettered by the weight of an earthly nature; the pardoned ascend to the blessed; a mysterious horror pervades even their hosts no joy, nor peace, nor blessedness, are to be found there. . . . Christ, the principal figure of the whole, wants every attribute but that of the Judge: no expression of divine majesty reminds us that it is the Saviour who exercises this office." 2

2 Kugler (F. T.), Handbook of the Hist, of Painting, p. 308. In the church of S. Paul beyond the walls is a series of mosaics above the chancel arch set up by order of Galla Placida, daughter of Theodosius and sister of Honorius (d. 450). The principal figure is that of Christ, a colossal half-length. "This figure," says Mr. Hemans, "is the earliest example, in Roman art, of aspect neither youthful nor beautiful, but elderly, stern and sombre. We cannot but see, in this art-work, an evidence of deterioration in the religious ideals; it is the Son of God withdrawn from human sympathies, invested with attributes that only excite terror the Judge effacing the Redeemer." Historic and Monumental Rome, 1874, pp. 663-4

The Eternal Father was conceived of as the inexorable Law-giver, and the Divine Son as the remorseless Judge executing the laws of the Father, an object of Terror not of Love.

**Originates the Worship of Saints**-- Poor humanity, quivering with dread, looked around for advocates, mediators, to stand between them and the Judge, and found them in the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. Thus, the vast abuse of saint-worship, deflecting from the Saviour to the creature the office of advocacy for a sinful world, proper to Himself alone, was due to the prevalence of Augustinian teaching in the Latin Church. As the dogma of Inexorable Fate in the heathen world had produced the worship of Intermediaries, so its introduction into the Christian Church produced saint-worship.

The Reformers struck at, and banished, this abuse; but it left man shivering as a criminal before the Judgment-seat, with none between to plead his cause, to entreat for mitigation of sentence, if not for pardon.

**The Institutes**-- It was out of the dry bones of Augustine, Anselm,



Aquinas, and the schoolmen that Calvin constructed his system. In the Church of the Bona Morte at Rome, is a vault decorated with bones. Edmond About says that a Sacristan there devotes his life to the systematic arrangement of these bones. "'Monsieur,' me disait il, 'Je ne suis heureux qu'ici, au milieu de mon oeuvre. Ce monument que j'entretiens, que j'embellis, que j'egaye par mon talent, c'est devenu l'orgueil, et la joie, de ma vie.'"

The ossuary upon which Calvin spent his life was the Institutes. When this treatise appeared, then the whole horror of the situation revealed itself. Calvin had reduced Augustinian philosophy to a rigorous dogmatic formula, and forced it on men as an Article of Faith and a law of life.

It would have stood no chance whatever of being generally received had it not been that it suffered every man who accepted it to consider himself to be the Elect of God, and absolutely certain of Salvation, as it also provided him with the pleasing conviction that everyone whom he disliked, who had offended him, who did not accept this doctrine, would be damned everlastingly.

**The Roman Church beat a partial retreat.**-- It has never completely emancipated itself from the shackles of Augustinianism. It dared not do so, encumbered as it was with the consequences it had brought upon itself the Blessed Virgin appealed to as the Mother of Mercy, the Refuge of Sinners, the Mediatrix between man and his Judge. More over, the principle justifying persecution and the Inquisition was based on Augustine's teaching and practice. This could not be repudiated. But in England our divines were brought face to face, eye to eye, with Augustinian fatalism in its most complete, crystallized form, in the five points of the Synod of Dort, and they met it with far more determination than could the Romish theologians, clogged with its pernicious results. We have room here to quote only Jeremy Taylor, combating the doctrine of the sentence of Condemnation passed on all men because that once, at a remote date, Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit.

**Opposition of B. Jeremy Taylor**-- Bishop Jeremy Taylor wrote bluntly on the matter. "Was it just in God to damn all mankind to the eternal pains of hell for Adam's sin, committed before they had any being, or could consent to it, or know of it? If it could be just, then anything in the world can be just; and it is no matter who is innocent, or who is criminal,



directly or by choice, since they may turn devils in their mothers bellies; and it matters not whether there be any laws or no, since it is all one that there be no laws, and that we do not know whether there be or no; and it matters not whether there be any judicial proofs, for we may as well be damned without judgment as be guilty without action." 1

1 Works, IX, p. 332.

"And truly to say that for Adam's sin it is just in God to condemn infants to the eternal flames of Hell, and to say that concupiscence or natural inclinations before they pass into any act would bring eternal condemnation from God's presence into the eternal condemnation of devils, are two such horrid propositions that, if any Church in the world should expressly affirm them, I, for my part, should think it unlawful to communicate with her in the defence or profession of either, and to think it would be the greatest temptation in the world to make men not to love God, of whom men so easily speak such horrid things."1

1 Ibid., p. 373.

"Abraham was confident with God, Wilt thou slay the righteous with the wicked? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And if it be unrighteous to slay the righteous with the wicked, it is also unjust to slay the righteous for the wicked. ... It were an intolerable law, and no community would be governed by it, that the father or the grandfather should sin, and the son or nephew should be punished." 2

2 Ibid., p. 39. Sancroft's *Fur praeordinatus* was so true an exposure of Predestination and its results that it aroused the fury of the Puritans.

There is more to the same effect.

**Election**-- The expression Election is freely employed as a substitute for Predestination, or as representing the same from a slightly different point of view. Both are made use of to establish the doctrine of Arbitrariness as a characteristic quality of the Most High. S. Paul is freely quoted to substantiate this. The text relative to Jacob and Esau is triumphantly appealed to as conclusive. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. It was said unto her (Rebecca) The Elder shall serve the Younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."



But in this case Election is the consequence of prevision, not of Predestination. It may be argued that God elected Jacob to be the Father of the Faithful in place of Esau, because He foresaw that the former would be docile, and the latter indocile. Esau, deliberately, by an exercise of free will, sold his birth-right. And that this selection was thus motivated would seem to have occurred to the Apostle, from what he subjoins: "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." But unrighteousness there would be with God if the Election were made out of caprice. 3

3 See Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XVI, XVIII, XIX; also Hom. II, on i Cor. i, 4-7; Hom. XIV, on i Cor. iv, 21, "God made thee a free agent, that thou mightest not accuse Him as though necessity bound thee."

**When the Doctrine is Harmless--** Although the doctrine of Predestination and Election has had a mischievous effect on many, many thousands, driving some to despair, others to overweening self-confidence, it has not had this effect universally. John Henry Newman wrote in his Apologia: "One of the first books I read was a work of Romaine's; I neither recollect the title nor the contents, except one doctrine, which, of course, I do not include among those which I believe to have come from a divine source, viz. the doctrine of final perseverance. I received it at once, and believed that the inward conversion of which I was conscious (and of which I still am more certain than that I have hands and feet) would last unto the next life, and that I was elected to eternal glory. I have no consciousness that this belief had any tendency whatever to lead me to be careless about pleasing God." This unquestionably is the condition of many pious persons who are conscious of having turned to God; but, as Newman, in the final sentence, himself hints, it is liable to conduce to carelessness and lack of fervour in pressing onward, in running the race of the Christian course.

Even S. Paul, whose conversion was miraculous, could fear lest he who preached to others might himself become a castaway; and surely this timorousness, this clinging to Grace, is more like the Christian life than an Assurance which banishes anxiety, and superinduces, or may superinduce, religious lassitude, and which too often engenders the Pharisaic spirit.

Passively received, this doctrine is but a form of words, and means no more than the hope of a happy future, which every soul, with or without just grounds, entertains. But it fits into vigorous, self-reliant minds, and



leads them to swell with confidence, to walk the earth as if it already belonged to them, to regard themselves as impeccable and infallible; "I am Sir Oracle, and when I open my mouth let no dog bark! "ready to regard others, halting as to absolute conviction, as passed over to the power of the devil.

**Speculative Theories made Articles of Faith--** It is in Confessions of "Evangelical "bodies that Predestination, Reprobation, the Irresistibility of Grace, the Denial of Free Will are elevated to be Articles of Faith. In the Thirty- nine Articles the 9th, 10th, and 17th deal with Original Sin, Free Will, Predestination, and Election, yet in such cautious terms as not to compromise the English Church. That on Predestination and Election is the least satisfactory; but its terminology was adopted so as not to condemn Augustinianism; as the teaching of that father, at the time, was overwhelmingly authoritative in Rome as well as in Geneva and in Canterbury. Moreover, it allows Predestination to exist, in a fashion, which nobody in his senses can deny.

Already, even in Scotland, except among the most ignorant, and in Wales the authority of the Institutes and of the Westminster Confession is on the wane. Predestination as a doctrine of Salvation has had its day, and by most men is tacitly rejected or disguised into something else.

**All Based on a Single Hypothesis--** As we have seen already and shall again urge, it rests wholly and solely on a single hypothesis the Denial of Free Will. It is like one of Prince Rupert's Drops, of which if you snap a petty thread the whole glass globule shivers into dust.

An army chaplain meeting a Scottish soldier who had imbibed a drop too much offered to guide him to the barracks.

On the way Sandy became discursive:

"Ye ken, chaplain," said he, "ma faither is a very releegious man, and I'm that way inclined masel'. Noo I'd like to ha'e a bit argument wi'ye on Predestination."

"Hadn't you better wait until you are sober, Sandy?" he replied.

"Hoots mon," said the Scot, "I don't care a d---- aboot Predestination when I m sober."

That is very much the opinion of every sensible Presbyterian at the



present day. Calvinism, as a religious force, is no more.

**The Man of Common Sense called up--** Plato, in the dialogue Meno, makes Socrates show the Thessalian that every man comes into the world possessed of innate ideas; to exhibit this he summons a boy and sets before him certain elementary geometrical figures, and draws out from his answers the revelation that he--though wholly unlearned in geometry--possesses certain innate faculties as to perception of shape and addition of numerals.

In like manner all men possess innate moral perceptions and rational faculties, their moral perceptions may be more or less obscure, and may in process of time become more or less distorted. Nevertheless, there they are.

We will call up the man of Common Sense, nay even, like Socrates, the urchin of nine or ten years, to refute the Genevan divine. "Boy! tell us, have you Free Will, or are you a mere machine?" The answer at once given is "Certainly I can determine my own course so far as circumstances allow. Do you take me for a fool? I am not going to stay here to answer silly questions. Gentlemen! Good day! "But grant that man has a Free Will, and the entire Augustinian-Calvinian superstructure crumbles away.

**The Premiss Denied, the whole System Collapses--** The Premiss of Calvin denied; then we see that the Creator accorded to man, His Creature, the royal prerogative of Free Will, of self-determination. By so doing He precluded Himself from the exercise of Predestination as to man moral acts and future condition. A man who has given his cage-bird freedom cannot compel it to do this or that which he had taught it, cannot compel, even expect it to return He may whistle to it, call to it, invite it with grain or fruit but his power over it has been voluntarily abandoned and can no more be exerted.

God does, indeed, so far predestinate one born into the world as to determine where he shall be born and what shall be his faculties of mind and body; whether he shall be the child of a prince or of a pauper, whether he be born at Tooting or in Timbuctoo. But to that His Predestination is limited. As to man's moral course that is left to man's self-determination .



**Appeal through Fear, Reason, and Love**-- A being to have the capacity for loving or fearing must be free; and freedom brings with it the power to rebel. God, in having given to man Free Will, to be true to His purpose and to His nature, must bear with man's rebellion; all He can do, in the nature of the case, is to recall man to obedience through action on his will, and this He does through manifestation of Himself in power, and above all in love. Under the Dispensation, the appeal to the Jew was through of fear chastisement, to bring him to obedience.

But to the heathen world the appeal was through Reason. And here Plato and his school approached nearest to the truth, whereas the Oriental thinkers went widely wrong in accentuating the antagonism between the spirit and the body.

Under the New Dispensation the appeal to man to obey is through Love.

The appeal through fear had effected one thing, it had brought the Jew to break definitely with idolatry. After the return from Babylon there was no more straying in that direction, but there was a hardening into spiritual pride.

The appeal to Reason had produced no wide-spread result. Philosophy might regulate the life of the thinking man, but had no power whatever over the generality of men.

The appeal to love, through Jesus Christ stretched on the Cross, extending His arms to all the world who can shut his eyes to its consequences? "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. . . . They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more: neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Who dares to say that the appeal to love has not met with a mighty



response, and is being answered every day, and will be answered to the end of time?

**Diametrically Opposed Systems--** Thus: The Christian system of Salvation and Augustinian-Calvinian Predestination are in diametrical opposition.